

VZCZCXYZ0001  
PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHUL #2855/01 2340355  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
P 220355Z AUG 06  
FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9818  
INFO RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 1108  
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY 7473  
RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME PRIORITY 0790  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 1191  
RUEHSH/AMCONSUL SHENYANG PRIORITY 3083  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

UNCLAS SEOUL 002855

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EAP/K  
STATE PASS USAID/JBRAUSE  
ROME FOR FODAG  
NSC FOR TONG, CHA

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: ECON EAID PREL PINR KS KN  
SUBJECT: DPRK TO RECEIVE ADDITIONAL FLOOD AID

REF: SEOUL 2828

SUMMARY

-----

¶11. In addition to the previously announced 100,000 metric tons of rice in response to extensive flooding in the North (reftel), the South Korean government will also send material for reconstruction and repair. Official estimates of death and damage were also released following discussions between the North and South Korean Red Cross Societies. South Korean government officials report that this assistance -- much larger than original reports of rice shipments -- is an exception to the post-missile launch decision to suspend aid to the North. End Summary.

¶12. Following a series of meetings, both internally and with DPRK officials, the South Korean government announced significant additional relief measures to assist North Korean recovery efforts.

MORE THAN RICE

-----

¶13. Ministry of Unification officials outlined for us a list of equipment and supplies that will be provided to the DPRK. In addition to the emergency shipment of rice, the South Korean government will also supply:

- a) 100,000 metric tons of cement
- b) 5,000 tons of concrete-reinforcing bars (rebar)
- c) 100 eight-ton dump trucks
- d) 50 excavators
- e) 60 front-end loaders
- f) 80,000 blankets
- g) 10,000 sets of emergency relief kits

¶14. Because of the urgency in supplying the material, MOU officials explained that the vehicles and construction equipment would come from stocks on hand, not newly procured.

¶15. The aid shipments are scheduled to commence by the end of August and will be sent to the North Korean ports of Nampo, Songrim, Wonsan and Heungnam.

DISASTER ESTIMATES

-----

¶ 6. According to the North Korean Red Cross, the areas most heavily affected by the flooding include in South Pyongan Province: Shinyang, Yangduk, Sungchun and Hoichang counties. In North Hwanghae Province: Shinpyong County, In Gangwon Province: Wonsan city, and the counties of Pyonggang, Geumgang, Anbyeon, Kosan and Cholwon. In South Hamkyung Province, Gowon, Yoduk and Sudong Counties were worst hit.

¶ 7. DPRK officials continue to cite low casualty estimates, reporting only 150 deaths. This is in stark contrast with estimates provided by at least one NGO (reftel), which insists that some 10,000 North Koreans were killed in the flooding. Since reftel, the NGO has increased its estimates, assessing that more than 50,000 are dead or missing.

¶ 8. North Korean Red Cross estimates of the flooding damage include:

- a) 27,000 hectares of crop damage
- b) 36,000 households flooded
- c) 500 public buildings destroyed
- d) 90 bridges destroyed
- e) 50 kilometers of damaged rail lines

COMMENT

-----  
¶ 9. MOU officials are clearly sensitive to perceptions about this increase in assistance to the North. MOU officials insisted on briefing A/DCM about the additional aid over the weekend in order to inform us before the official announcement was made to the Korean people. Korean government officials assure us that the decision to suspend its delivery of bilateral aid to the North still stands and that this is a one-off shipment in response to the dire situation in the areas affected by the flooding.

¶ 10. While South Korean government officials insist that the delivery and use of the relief supplies will be monitored, if past experience proves to be the norm, monitoring will be mostly limited to delivery operations at the port and some nearby towns.

STANTON